

INTERRACIAL REVIEW

A JOURNAL FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY



THE PLIGHT OF NEGRO LEADERSHIP

Thomas F. Doyle

•

CATHOLIC BOY SCOUTS IN HARLEM

Emanuel A. Romero

•

BOND OF UNITY

Harry L. Binsse

•

PLAYS AND A POINT OF VIEW

Theophilus Lewis

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Editorials

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Reviews

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Statistics



Castel Gandolfo, Oct. 27 (A.P.). — Pope Pius XII in the first Encyclical of his reign blamed "the denial of God" for leading the world to war and pleaded for peace today.

— *The New York Sun*

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INTERRACIAL REVIEW

Christian Democracy

Christian Democracy rejects artificial inequalities due to racial myths, material greed or physical violence and recognizes only such accidental inequalities as necessarily accompany human life at all times and in all places.

As the objective of the Catholic interracial program, we define Christian Democracy as a society in which the God-given dignity and destiny of every human person is fully recognized, in laws, government, institutions and human conduct.

POSTULATES

- The Catholic Interracial Program has a twofold aim: (1) the combating of race prejudice; (2) the attainment of social justice for the whole social group regardless of race.

- "Nothing does more harm to the progress of Christianity and is more against its spirit than . . . race prejudice amongst Christians. — There is nothing more widely spread in the Christian world." — *Jacques Maritain*

- "From the evidence on hand today, we cannot scientifically prove that the Nordic or the Negro is superior or inferior, one to the other." — *Rev. John M. Cooper*

- The interracial problem is the greatest world problem of today. It is the major threat to international peace. In America the interracial problem is one of grave national concern. It is perhaps the biggest problem confronting the Catholic Church in America.

- "Intolerance towards Negroes in the United States is perhaps the acme of the racial intolerance of modern nationalism." — *Carlton J. H. Hayes*

- The spiritual aspect of the Catholic interracial program flows from the common membership of all races in the Mystical body of Christ and the common expression of this unity in the Church's liturgy.

- Prejudice on the part of Catholic laity is a barrier to the conversion of the Negro and a trial to the new found Faith of the Negro convert.

- "We must concede that the natural rights of the Negro are identical in number and sacredness to the rights of white persons." — *Rev. Francis J. Gilligan, S.T.D.*

- Catholic principles maintaining the equality of all men and upholding the sanctity of the Negro's natural rights, impose upon all Catholics a rule of conduct which must be followed, regardless of any temporary inconveniences, apprehensions or difficulties that may be encountered.

February — 1942

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INTERRACIAL REVIEW

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The Interracial Field

INTERESTING STATISTICS

Number of Negroes in U. S.....	13,000,000
Estimated Number of Protestant Negroes...	5,000,000
Estimated Number of Catholic Negroes.....	300,000
Estimated Number Unchurched.....	7,750,000
Number of Negroes Attending Colleges.....	23,038

Number of Catholic Negro Churches.....	282
Number of Catholic Negro Schools.....	263
Negro Enrollment in Catholic Schools.....	50,000
Priests Engaged in Colored Missions.....	450
Sisters Engaged in Colored Missions.....	1,600

Negroes in New York City	478,346
Negroes in Chicago.....	233,000
Negroes in Philadelphia.....	219,000
Negroes in Washington.....	132,068

Citizen, Third Class!

Hearings before the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices, held in this city this week, have indicated that private employment agencies, labor unions and employers in many cases discriminate against individuals because of race, nationality or religion. The Negro probably suffers most by this injustice. Loyal men and women of "enemy alien" birth or ancestry come next. Some employers inquire as to an applicant's religious belief. Mayor La Guardia, Lieutenant Governor Poletti, spokesman for the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish faiths, and other witnesses protested against these practices.

The Mayor described the problem as national. There is no reason, however, why local communities should not attack discrimination on their own initiative. It always comes down to an individual worker being denied a fair deal at a certain time and place.

In Europe's "New Order" there are first-class, second-class and third-class citizens—perhaps other categories further down the scale. We should recognize the Nazi infection by that arrangement if by nothing else. If we recognize classes of citizenship here—and this is what some of our labor unions and employers have been doing—we introduce the Nazi system to that extent. The practice is outrageous at any time. At the present time it is giving aid and comfort to the enemy.—*New York Times*.

This Month and Next

We regard the article, "The Plight of Negro Leadership," by THOMAS F. DOYLE, as highly important. The author considers the subject discussed at the recent interracial conference held during the Seventh Anniversary of the Council. Mr. Doyle calls attention to the consequences of denying fundamental rights and essential opportunities to the Negro. Mr. Doyle was born and educated in Ireland, where he began writing while on a Dublin daily. He is a frequent contributor to the *Review* and has written for *America*, *The Commonweal*, *The Catholic World*, *The Sign* and *Extension* . . . EMANUEL A. ROMERO, long a resident of Harlem, is Recorder of the Catholic Interracial Council. As the organizer and Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 155 it is fitting that he describe a memorable event which took place at the De Porres Interracial Center. On February 8, the newly organized Irish-American Committee for Interracial Justice presented an American Flag to this new Scout Troop. A very interesting and stimulating article . . . We are indebted to the editors of the *Commonweal* for permission to print an outstanding article "Bond of Unity," by HARRY L. BINSSE. The author, who is Managing Editor of the *Commonweal*, is a graduate of Harvard University and is well known in the field of journalism. Mr. Binsse was one of the organizers of the Catholic Interracial Council and of the Liturgical Arts Society . . . Our readers will like "The Porgy Legend," by THEOPHILUS LEWIS. This month he discusses both plays and critics. Well worth reading and passing along to a friend interested in the drama . . . Again we thank THOMAS F. DOYLE; this time for the excellent review of "They Knew Lincoln." The book and this review are highly recommended.

Census Report — 1940

According to a report just issued by the Bureau of the Census, the Negroes represent 9.8% of the total population of the United States with a figure of 12,865,518. This is an increase of 974,375 over the number recorded in 1930.

Negro population is divided into the following sections: the North, 2,790,193; the South, 9,904,619; the West, 170,706.

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DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

The first sessions of the hearing before the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices in New York revealed that many employers and labor unions are discriminating against job applicants on the ground of race or color. Vigorous protests were made by Mayor La Guardia, Lieutenant-Governor Poletti, the Rev. John P. Boland, Chairman of the New York State Labor Relations Board; Dr. Robert W. Searle, Secretary of the Greater New York Federation of Churches; and Rabbi J. V. Cohen, representing several Jewish organizations.

Despite the fact that certain progress has been made since the issuance of the President's executive order condemning employment discrimination in the defense industries, the situation found in the New York area is typical of conditions throughout the country.

Although many firms have complied with the President's order, a greater number have either employed three or four Negroes for routine and menial jobs or excluded them altogether, on one pretext or another.

Furthermore, many labor unions continue to bar Negroes from membership.

Nor is this the only form of injustice he is encountering. In the midst of our all-out war effort, the Negro, who is seeking to share all the rights and responsibilities of democracy, is faced with innumerable barriers to racial progress and security as well as obstacles that prevent his full participation in the defense program.

The recent lynching of a Negro suspect in Sikeston, Missouri, indicates that this barbaric tradition has not been outlawed. The Navy refuses to accept Negroes except as mess boys. The Army continues to discriminate. The Air Service has restricted the number of Negro enrollees to the smallest fraction.

What can be the consequences to the morale of Negro Americans? What can be expected in the way of improved race relations? What about the supreme need for national unity?

The *Interracial Review* contends that the present

sorry plight of the American Negro calls for a supreme effort on the part of the Government, industry, labor, and the leaders in every community in order to eradicate this form of racism. The rights and the responsibilities of democracy must be shared by every American. This is the American way of life.

Private Robert H. Brooks

All this business about blood is very puzzling. Some day scientists will look back to our days, and wonder just what kind of people we were anyhow.

The Red Cross, for instance, asks us to donate a pint of blood for the "blood banks." But Negro blood must be kept in a separate refrigerator from the blood of white persons. Nobody knows why, since no one has ever yet discovered a difference, but that's how "they" feel about it.

There are times, too, when our country asks us to give much more than a pint of blood; asks us to pour out all the blood there is in our veins and arteries, in the defense of our homes, our country and our liberties. When that happens, no difference is found between the blood of those who have one kind of complexion, and those who are identified by another.

Private Robert H. Brooks, as an example, who was killed near Fort Stotsenburg in the Philippines on December 8, and was the Armored Force's first casualty of the war. In honor of this heroic death, Major General Jacob L. Devers, chief of the Armored Force, ordered that the main parade ground at Fort Knox, Kentucky, should be named in his honor.

No difference was noted in the blood shed by Private Brooks from that of every and any other man, woman or child in our nation for whom he made the supreme sacrifice.

If there was any distinction it was in the blood of General Devers himself, which proved to be just a bit redder and truer than that of many other of his compatriots in high places, military and otherwise. After the order was issued, General Devers was informed that the man for whom Brooks Field was being named was the son of colored share-croppers living near Sadieville, Kentucky. But if any representations were made on this score, they carried no more success than did a deputation that, two thousand years ago, tried to force a distinguished official of the ancient world

to alter an inscription he had composed for the Cross of Christ. The Fort Knox order stood; and said General Devers in his speech of dedication:

For the preservation of America, the soldiers and sailors guarding our outposts are giving their lives. And in this, the greatest democracy the world has ever known, neither riches nor poverty, neither creed nor race draws a line of demarcation in this hour of national crisis.

Nine generals were in attendance at the impressive ceremonies at Fort Knox. "None," said General Devers, "can make a greater sacrifice for the nation than the soldier who gives his life. For Robert Brooks, the bugle will sound taps."

Lieutenant Colonel Father William D. Cleary, chaplain at Fort Knox, offered a prayer. Taps were sounded and three volleys were fired by the Infantry platoon.

"Neither creed nor race." The blood left by Private Brooks under the tropical skies and stars of Luzon was a Negro's blood. It was also the blood of a Catholic, repeatedly mingled, through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, with Blood so noble that "one single drop thereof," says the great Saint Thomas Aquinas, "can cleanse the whole world of all sin and crime."

As we said, some day there will be tall wondering over gnats that are strained and camels that are swallowed by the gullets of some Americans in this would-be enlightened age. But there will be no wondering as to the fitness of the tribute paid, in perpetuity, to the memory of Private Robert H. Brooks.

Negroes in Sheet Metal

Prompted by an article that appeared recently in a national magazine, a young journeyman sheet-metal worker, in the State of Washington, wrote in with a few suggestions of his own. According to his own description he is "23 years old, Irish descent, Catholic," and attended parochial school in Montana and went to college in Wyoming. He has a good, well-paying job, but wants to do his bit toward helping his fellow-workers of the Negro race. This is his picture of the situation:

I work in a Navy yard where there are 14,000 men employed. Of this number as near as we can find out there are only three Negro mechanics. Two of these are sheet-metal workers and the other is an electrician's helper but will be

promoted to an electrician within a short while. I am a sheet-metal worker and the two Negroes have benches adjacent to mine and we have a good chance to become acquainted and have discussions. In this same yard they have a large force of men doing nothing but maintenance who are on relief. Of this number, the majority are Negroes. I state this to prove the point that the Negro's situation is due mainly to unemployment because he has no trade nor the opportunity to learn one. The two Negroes in our shop are young fellows, about 25, and are from Kansas City. They average \$66 per week while the other Negroes on relief do well to earn \$63 a month, which means a great deal in the standard of living. They were janitors in a large shop and the foreman took a liking to them and taught them the trade.

As for his plan:

My idea is to take the young fellows, say from 18 to 24, and teach them. The equipment would not cost very much as it can be bought second hand and their time is not valuable. If they would spend six months of their time in learning the fundamentals of the trade, 90 per cent of them would be able to earn a living. Another angle to this, a plan could be worked out to secure contracts to manufacture articles, which many small shops are doing now by securing sub-contracts. I know this plan would not help them all but those it did would surely benefit and they could help somebody else.

Now, says our correspondent, is "your golden opportunity, for the Government needs metal-workers, machinists and tool workers more than any other trade."

There is soundness and sense in his proposal, as far as it goes. But for it to amount to more than a mere proposal, it is obviously necessary that Negro youth should receive the encouragement and feel the impulse to make use of whatever opportunities for skilled training that happen to be available for them. All too many who have these opportunities, fail to possess either the encouragement or the impulse.

It is equally obvious that where these opportunities are lacking, which is the case in a large area of well established Negro educational institutions, it is high time that they be provided, whether through action on the part of the trustees of these institutions or through other agencies.

Last, but not least, there remains the stark fact that to *qualified* and trained skilled workers, employment

is still denied on purely racial grounds. Education of employers and union leaders in this respect should not be left to a few pioneering individuals nor to Government committees on Fair Employment Practice alone. It is a matter that concerns every Catholic employer, every Catholic union man. To make a few of these things known among his associates on the Pacific Coast is one way this young man can help to do his bit toward interracial justice.

The C. L. U. Inquiry

In these days of investigations, Congressional and otherwise, the Catholic Laymen's Union of New York City, group of Negro professional and business men, decided to hold an investigation of their own. Unlike the Dies Committee, they had no power to subpoena unwilling testifiers; but they believed that purely voluntary testimony would go a long way toward clearing up some of the fog that has rested upon conditions in the New York Metropolitan district, especially in the field of employment opportunity.

Accordingly, on September 25, 1941, the C.L.U. began a series of monthly conference panels, in the form of "hearings." The purpose of these hearings was two-fold: (1) to help create additional job opportunities for qualified and efficient Negro workers and (2) to acquaint Negroes with the various training facilities. The task of the Laymen's Union was immensely lightened by the generous, purely voluntary assistance of a highly skilled Negro stenographer. Her exact and detailed record of each event's proceedings will offer the basis for a summary at the close of the series, which, in turn, will provide material for recommendations and, if means can possibly be secured, for publication.

Plans were worked out in detail by a competent committee of seven members, with Guichard Parris as Chairman. The following Basic Principles were adopted for the investigation:

"The Catholic Laymen's Union holds that the unemployment question can be solved only by availing a one-sided policy and by uniting the two main aspects of the unemployment situation. Jobs must be found for Negro youth, which means that employers need to be educated in the principles of justice and charity and enlightened as to the capacities of the Negro worker. But Negro youth has to be prepared

to fill the jobs, to be technically and morally qualified to apply for them or for the training needed for them and to hold them when obtained. If we walk on both of these feet, we shall get somewhere."

Subjects of the panel hearings, past and future, are as follows:

September 25. Introduction. Description of techniques used to widen job opportunities, by Henry W. Pope, of the New York Welfare Council.

October 16. Achievements, by vocational training agencies for Negro youth. "Witnesses" on this occasion were such prominent persons as Dr. Sidney Lake, N. Y. Vocational High School; Miss Beatrice Candee, NYA; Miss Marion Forrester, the "Junior Achievement"; and A. Aylesworth Ayer, Boys' Club of America.

November 17. A youth session. Young people themselves evaluated the training they were getting.

December 18. Successful Job Finding Techniques, such as that of Charles C. Berkeley, Director of the Brooklyn Coordinating Committee for Defense Employment.

January 15. Public and Private Employment Agencies. Described by Mrs. Carita V. Roane, Manager, 135th Street Branch, N. Y. State Employment Service, and F. S. Grant, experienced private employment agent and member of the Laymen's Union.

February 19. Labor Unions and the Trend. Chief Witnesses on this occasion will be A. Philip Randolph, International President, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the Rev. John A. Delaney, S.J., Director, Institute of Social Order, N. Y. City.

March 19. Personnel Relations, by competent personnel officials.

April 16. Cooperatives and Rural Projects in Relations to Employment Opportunities. The Rev. Patrick T. Quinlan, First Vice President, National Catholic Rural Life Conference, will outline some of the most important experiences.

May 21. Summary, Looking into the Future. Discussants: George S. Schuyler, Theophilus Lewis and Guichard Parris.

All the hearings are held at the DePorres Interracial Center, 20 Vesey Street, from 5:15 to 6:30 p. m. on the dates mentioned (third Thursday of each month). The public are cordially invited, regardless of race or creed.

In investigating and carrying out these investigations, the Catholic Laymen's Union is observing literally the principle of the group-conducted and charity-motivated "inquiry," as a necessary preliminary to sound "judgment" and practical, effective "action," as laid down in the master outlines of Catholic Action. Would similar groups, racial or interracial, carry on similar inquiries in their own localities, the heart would readily be reached of some of the most knotty and vexatious social and economic problems affecting the lives of Negroes in our communities.

Notes From

XAVIER UNIVERSITY

The First Catholic College for Negro Youth

PROGRAM ACCELERATED

In keeping with changes recommended in educational activities at the recent meeting of the Association of American Colleges and at the National Conference of College and University Presidents on Higher Education and War, held at Baltimore, Maryland, Xavier University will accelerate its academic program. University students in the undergraduate colleges and schools will be able to complete the regular four-year course in three years. However, the new schedule will not bring a lowering of academic standards.

The University educational program aims to prepare Xavierites for the many fields open to trained persons in the service of the nation. New courses have been added in: mathematics, physics, chemistry, basic engineering subjects, Morse Code, typing, stenography, first aid, home nursing, health, home economics and military tactics. Special courses will be offered in home economics in training women students for technical and scientific fields and for non-combatant war tasks.

DEFENSE PROGRAM

Active participation in the defense program of the nation began here as soon as the selective service act was passed. Since that time no educational institution in New Orleans has given a more prompt, unanimous, and enthusiastic response to the call to participate in the program of civilian defense and active service in the many branches of the nation's armed forces. Both the students and the faculty members have a very large representation in the important instructor's corps of the American Red Cross. They are being assigned to teach air-raid wardens throughout the City of New Orleans.

The sale of defense stamps to students of the University increase daily. Every member of the faculty has already pledged to invest a certain amount each month in the purchase of defense bonds.

THE PLIGHT OF NEGRO LEADERSHIP

By THOMAS F. DOYLE

Discussions such as that recently provoked by Harlem's so-called crime wave invariably invite the question: what are Negro leaders doing to improve conditions in their communities? It is natural enough that men and women to whom the problems of the Negro are as a closed book should ask a question of this kind. Particularly when news editors permit the activities of petty hoodlums to obscure the real nature of the Negro community's plight.

Some of our public officials, who really ought to have known better, went no further in their analysis of the Harlem incidents than to suggest that residents of this area should have more police protection. That, *per se*, was a sensible observation, but as an all-inclusive remedy it ranks in absurdity with the suggestion also made that "planned parenthood" would enable Harlem to cope with crime, ill-health and poverty. The confused citizen who wanted to know what leadership is doing evinced a much more intelligent reaction. In the answer to his question the whole crux of the problem confronting not Harlem alone but every Negro community in the country is bared.

Perhaps the question should have been phrased differently. What we really want to know is: what is wrong with leadership as such? Has it been idle, indifferent or inept? Most impartial and competent observers, approached on this score have responded with an emphatic no. They see in the Negro leader not a reflection of failure or ineptitude, but another Hercules battling the Hydra, a monster that cannot be overcome until its central head (Race Prejudice to us!) has been lopped off. For every case of discrimination the Negro leader helps to combat, two more seem to crop up. And so, it seems, it must be until it is possible to extirpate the real root of his trouble, which is not in his own community, but in the great outer community of white America.

Judged by the comparatively few conquests won for the race, it is not surprising to find people who believe that Negro leaders have been both indifferent and ineffective. But these have no historical perspective. For between the abysmal plight of the Negro of 1860 and the dogged hopefulness of his descendant of 1942 have intervened a succession of almost incredible victories against odds that seemed insuperable. If these advances are merely the bright spots,

they serve to vindicate the sacrifices of the Tubmans and Washingtons and to justify two important conclusions: that Negro leadership has fully proved its capacity and that if what has been achieved in the face of obstacles commands a respectful attention, surely a much more remarkable development is bound to follow when racial handicaps no longer exist.

The root of the difficulty is that the Negro leader is still forced to apply his influence and energy to matters outside rather than inside his community. Or, to put it more plainly, nine-tenths of his time is taken up in matters pertaining to the Negro's constitutional and other *de jure* rights, leaving him with little opportunity to sponsor and direct the innumerable inter-community activities through which other minority groups and the American community at large have been able to protect and enrich the home, to afford guidance and inspiration to youth, and to combat a variety of social and economic ills.

Readers of the Review who were present at the discussion of Negro-white relations which featured the Seventh Anniversary celebration of the Catholic Interracial Council last month heard more than one speaker link the limitation on Negro leadership to the denial of basic rights to the Negro group. Much to the point was the observation made by Elmer A. Carter, editor of *Opportunity*, in answer to a question put by the Rev. Lambert Dunne, O.S.B., of the New Jersey Labor Advisory Board. "Negro leaders," said Mr. Carter, "must devote the greater portion of their attention to securing the Negro's fundamental rights as a citizen, and as a result the interior development of the group is neglected. I would say that Negro leadership as a whole has devoted most of its energy to securing basic rights of Negroes as citizens of the United States in attempting to secure for them a richer opportunity to participate in American life."

Raymond Pace Alexander, former president of the National Bar Association, told the conference of a distinguished Negro physician who is a member of at least ten organizations and takes part in every movement that comes up to prevent discrimination, to provide better housing in Philadelphia, to prevent segregation in schools and so on. "But," said this Negro lawyer, "he can't seem to make the progress

he otherwise would because his time is taken up in combating discrimination from outside. When he goes to a certain hospital, a State-supported institution, he has to go to a section which is set aside for colored people. This physician is now spending a great part of his time each week to break down the segregation that exists in this hospital for no other reason whatever except that our skin is black."

From the very inception of the national defense program the resources of Negro leadership have been severely taxed. Cases of discrimination in the armed forces and in the defense factories have evoked condemnation from whites and Negroes alike. The latest instance that comes to attention is the attempted diversion to the use of white families of a Detroit housing development which had been built for Negro families and into which these families were getting ready to move. Naturally Negro leaders felt called upon to protest such a flagrant injustice on the part of the Federal Works Agency. The campaign they were forced to wage in order to undo this mischief necessarily occupied a great deal of time and effort they could otherwise have devoted perhaps to other housing plans for the community. In this particular case a Government agency was at fault. Next week it may be a factory that discharges a Negro worker because members of a white union refuse to work beside him.

It is a national reproach that the Negro leader must continue even in a time of crisis to divert his energies to problems that would never arise but for the existence of denials and discriminations. The blame may be attributed to the attitudes of prejudice or indifference that characterize a great portion of the white population. With so much to be done for his own group he must continually turn away from the community and its problems in an effort to persuade white Americans to recognize and practice the principles of interracial justice implicit in the Bill of Rights. If basic rights are to be achieved for the race it is imperative that the Negro leader must make this the primary goal even at the risk of being called an absentee leader rather than as a vital, down-to-earth promoter of Negro community enterprise.

These are thoughts that should strike the conscience of those who, in moments of impatience, have harped upon the apparent neglect in Negro communities of the social media that elsewhere have proved so efficacious. It is argued at times that there is nothing

so unique in the Negro's position as to find no parallel among other groups who have labored against hardships and deprivations to raise their economic and cultural standards. The history of the early American immigrant, we are reminded, presents the same familiar picture of discrimination and poverty. All of which is very true. But what the critic forgets is that there was always a period which saw these new groups assimilated and welcomed into the larger community and thereafter treated on a basis of equality. Not so with the Negro.

The prejudice felt toward him did not die out after his liberation from slavery. Today he stands at the lowest extremity of the economic scale. Negro leadership, only too keenly aware of this, could, if it chose, present an indictment of interminable and horrifying detail. But this is not necessary. Everyone knows that the Negro is the most poorly paid worker amongst us, that he lives in the most overcrowded and miserable of our slums, that his children are herded into the poorest, most inadequately staffed schools.

This situation presents one of the great contradictions of American society. While we seek to build a better nation we actually defeat our own effort by keeping alive a virus that grows out of the poverty and frustration of the black ghetto and threatens to weaken the entire community. We tend to forget that what affects one may eventually affect all. An outstanding interracial leader, Dr. Will W. Alexander, put it very clearly some years ago when he said: "The one . . . thing to do about race relations is to forget them and begin thinking about the really pressing problems involved in the business of living which affects both Negroes and whites, and cannot be solved by one to the exclusion of the other. Land tenure, farm tenancy, economic questions, all these things, from cooperatives to questions of public health, must be dealt with as the joint problems they are of the men and women, regardless of race, who are members of the same community."

There is undoubtedly a definite lag in the Negro community. It could hardly be otherwise. Both Negro and white spokesmen at our recent conference, it will be recalled, testified to the cultural, educational and industrial retardation with which Negro leadership is at grips. It was generally agreed that this lag was due to a variety of causes, among them inadequate housing, discrimination in jobs and wages, all leading

to racial despair in young Negroes. Even the boys and girls attending school feel that they are not going to be able to enter the vocations for which they are being prepared *even though vacancies exist*. Admitting the difficulty of the situation, Dr. Walter L. Willigan, President of the American Catholic Sociological Society, contended nevertheless that the Negro should continue to work day in and day out to pick himself up, summoning to his aid leaders in every phase of Negro-American life—civil servants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, preachers and business men. One of the first steps of these leaders should be to obtain legislation guaranteeing their fundamental rights as members of American society.

Perhaps legislation will help to smooth the Negro's path. As to issuing a call for more intensive leadership on the part of the Negro talented tenth, this writer is far too deeply impressed by the already remarkable achievements of Negro leadership to endorse what might seem a criticism of the Negro group. He would turn, rather, to the dominant group whose lack of interest, whose prejudices and un-Christian attitudes create problems with which the Negro should not have to contend with at all. Fully as urgent and important as Negro leadership is the leadership among white groups, among students, professional men, business men and workers in industry, devoted to creating an interracial basis for a more truly equitable and humane order.

There are three compelling reasons why the Negro should be helped out of the pit of despair in which the prevalent attitude of white America has left him. Briefly these are: the Christian precept that recognizes the Negro as equal with us in the Fatherhood of God; patriotism, which obviously condemns attempts to injure or keep in economic subjection a tenth of the nation's population; common sense, or self-interest, which tells us that if we create or permit to exist conditions that inevitably engender crime and disease, the cost of these must be borne by the entire community. On the other hand, as more material and cultural advantages are shared by the Negro, the richer will be the pattern of American life.

It is true that gradually the American mind is beginning to form a more realistic concept of the Negro but far too many Americans still pretend, through some bafflingly obscure mental process, to justify his

exclusion from the operation of those supernatural laws which apply in equal degree to Negro and white alike. This serves to emphasize the great importance, indeed the indispensability of the religious leader, non-Catholic as well as Catholic, in gaining admittance for the Negro in the soul and heart of America. So long as the doors of opportunity remain closed, the Negro will not rise to the levels of development and contentment for which all of us are by nature ordained. That is why interracialism must find its major impetus in the churches and schools, wherein plastic young minds may absorb its message and the receptive consciences of older individuals may be illumined by the light of truth. The church and school first, then in the factory, the office, the places of government, the contest must be waged against the prejudice and ignorance that have spread a blight over the land. The propagandist assault waged by white and Negro leaders against these twin evils will open a wider path for the Negro himself in his crusade for progress and self-improvement. This educational program will take care of the problems that are peculiar to Negro leadership, the need to fight for the things that are essential to racial progress, the basic, natural rights.

The comparatively few instances in which conditions of absolute fair play and genuine cooperation on the part of white communities have left the Negro leader free to work among his people have proved not only his effectiveness, but have brought new benefits to the country as a whole. There is an immensely vast potential cultural and economic wealth in the millions of America's Negro people. Some of it has been developed, to the mutual enrichment of Negro and white, but what still lies untouched, what is still to be released, is beyond our capacity to estimate.

The Negro has an art that can make life more splendid and inspiring. Let it be developed. He has a mind to create. Let him create, for we shall all share in the fruit of his genius. He has the strength to build. Let him build. He has a hunger for the things of the body, for the material goods his family has been denied. Give him a chance to buy these things, for we shall all be a little better off when his purse is weighted more heavily with the coin of recompense. This is what God asks and what America will be blessed in giving. And that, finally, is why we should ask, not what is amiss in Negro leadership, but what is lacking in our own.

CATHOLIC BOY SCOUTS IN HARLEM

By EMANUEL A. ROMERO

There have been many very notable interracial gatherings held at the DePorres Interracial Center at 20 Vesey Street, New York City. None, however, was as unique as the one which was held on Thursday afternoon, February 8. It marked the first public appearance of the Irish-American Committee for Interracial Justice, which was recently organized under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Joseph T. Ryan of the City Court of New York to combat racial discriminations confronting the Negro. It was also the first public appearance of Boy Scout Troop 155 of the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Harlem.

The purpose of the meeting of these two organizations is best expressed in the words of Judge Ryan, as spokesman for the Committee. He stands in the center of the room. The American flag is in his hands. A 12-year-old colored Boy Scout, Manuel Romero, is facing him with outstretched hands.

Judge Ryan speaks: "We greet you as representatives of the Negro race, as young American citizens entitled to the same rights and privileges as are enjoyed by members of the white race . . . We desire

to express ourselves in a practical manner by presenting to your Troop this American Flag, symbolizing democracy, liberty and justice for all persons . . . Receive this flag and remember that reverence for God is the foundation stone of society and that He comes first. Love your country and the flag it represents; respect all that it stands for and defend it against all enemies."

The other Boy Scouts look on. They are inspired. They are grateful. The impression will be lasting. Scoutmaster Emanuel A. Romero, responded for the Troop. He thanked Judge Ryan and the other members of the Irish-American Committee for Interracial Justice for their interest and encouragement.

The Irish-American Committee is composed of men prominent in the public and professional life. They hope to be 100 strong when the entire membership is enrolled. The present roster is a distinguished one. It includes such men as Chief Justice Joseph T. Ryan of the City Court of New York, the Hon. William J. McNulty and Hon. Thomas J. Whelan, Justices of the Municipal Court; Hon. Matthew J. Troy, Justice of the Court of Special Sessions; New York State Sen-



STANDING: Emanuel A. Romero, Scoutmaster; Harold A. Stevens, President Catholic Interracial Council; and Members of Irish-American Committee: David a Broderick; Hon. Thomas J. Whelan; Hon. Joseph T. Ryan, Chairman; John B. Purcell; John W. A. Kelley. SEATED: Members of St. Thomas Scout Troop, 155

ator John L. Buckley; Assistant Attorney General John F. X. McGohey; James McGurkin, President General of the American-Irish Historical Society; J. C. Walsh and John W. A. Kelley, Secretary and Treasurer respectively of the American-Irish Historical Society; Dr. Raymond P. Sullivan, leading surgeon; Hon. John P. O'Brien, former Mayor of New York; Thomas W. A. Crowe and John D. Moore, Assistant Corporation Counsels; Richard Reid, Editor, *Catholic News*; John J. O'Connor, former Editor of the *Commonweal*, and George K. Hunton, Editor, *Interracial Review*.

There is no organization more worthy of support than the Boy Scouts of America. Its program is planned to train boys in scouting from the age of 12. The number 12 is a magic one. The Scout Law has 12 points: A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. And the boy when he enters scouting pledges under oath "to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight." To do all these things the Scout needs trained leadership. Such leadership must be furnished by young men and older men who are either brothers, fathers or older scouts.

Harlem needs leaders—leaders of youth who will instill in the young minds those cardinal principles of Scouting which will make these growing boys, our future citizens, physically strong, morally straight and spiritually alert.

Let us take just one concrete example of what can be done by illustrating what is being done in just one parish in Harlem. The Church of St. Thomas the Apostle is situated at 118th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.. It is one of five Catholic Churches doing work primarily among the colored residents of Harlem. It has a school in which are nearly 700 children.

St. Thomas Boy Scout Troop, No. 155, was organized on December 15, 1941. More than 50 boys applied for membership. Of this number, 31 have registered with the National headquarters. The meetings are held on Monday nights from 6:30 to 8:30 in the school hall. One family in the parish has supplied the Scoutmaster, the First Assistant Scoutmaster and a Patrol Leader. The Chaplain, who is also a member of the Troop Committee, is Rev. John Fleming, a young priest who was a Scout in his school days. The other members of the Troop Committee are fathers



Judge Ryan presenting the American Flag

of boys in the Troop and they all take an active part in the affairs of the organization. The men are members of the Holy Name Society in the parish.

Scouting in all its branches is being gradually introduced. Much of the present program is being tied-up with the National Defense program. The presentation of the charter and the flags to the Troop is to be made a very memorable event. The Catholic Investiture Ceremony for Boy Scouts is to be used. It means "Scouting for Catholics, adding the Supernatural." The first part of the ceremony will take place in the School Hall, where the Troop Colors and the Charter will be presented. The second part will take place in the Church, where the Chaplain will first bless the badges, troop numerals, community strips and neckerchiefs and present them to the candidates. Benediction will end the religious part of the ceremony. The newly enrolled Scouts and their friends will return to the School Hall for the closing program of speeches and a reception. The purpose of this impressive ceremony is to make the boys conscious of the dignity and responsibility of being Catholic Scouts.

The boy question in Harlem is an acute one. There are many families with one or more boys in each of the five parishes. And there are many families who could supply Troop Committeemen, Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters and Patrol Leaders. What is taking place in St. Thomas parish is possible in any part of Harlem. We can and ought to have more Scouting, not alone in Harlem but in every section of the country where there are colored boys.

BOND OF UNITY

By HARRY L. BINSSE

On January 9, 10 and 11 there took place in Anacostia, on the outskirts of Washington, D. C., a convention humble enough, unstartling enough, in its outward aspects yet profoundly revolutionary in its inward implication. Revolutionary in its attack upon the most unchristian of America's social attitudes, revolutionary in its example of what parochial and community life could mean if all of us truly worked to give these things meaning.

Anacostia is a hodgepodge settlement on Washington's South East periphery; its sharp slopes and gullies are inhabited almost entirely by "Negroes," although to a Northern visitor this would not be immediately evident, for many of these people have blue eyes and light hair and fair complexions. Yet by Washington standards—by Southern standards in general—they are "colored." The people are as poor as it is possible to be and yet survive; there are a few members of the middle class—government employees, teachers, professional men; most are domestic servants, laborers, retail clerks, relievers. A group among these about a year ago formed a study club—the League of the Christian Family—under the general guidance of the assistant to the pastor of the Catholic church in the neighborhood, although the participants were by no means all Catholics. For months they devoted themselves to studying the family; its nature, its problems, its functions, its perfection. And they decided that they should share what they had discovered with their neighbors. So a convention was arranged for the week-end which includes the Feast of the Holy Family.

The meetings were held in the auditorium of the public high school, in the recreation room of a Government housing project, in the parish hall. Each was under the chairmanship of one of the local Protestant ministers—Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal. The pattern set up for each meeting was the same; registration, an opening prayer, in which all who were present took part, and then general discussion following prepared papers delivered by members of the study group, the League of the Christian Family. On Sunday morning, not as a part of the convention, but nevertheless as a climax to it, a Solemn Mass was sung in the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

by the Most Reverend Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, who gave Communion to more than 500 members of the parish in family groups—first grandparents, then parents, then children. The Mass was followed by a public act of consecration on the part of all those present to the Christian conception of the family.

This naked skeleton in itself is remarkable enough; the warm flesh and blood that gave it life constituted the real character of the occasion. Most of the discussion leaders were men and women whose workday lives are spent at menial and ill-paid tasks; to such people the problems of family life are very real: "Families and Their Income"; "Families and Their Dwellings with Special Reference to Art in the Home"; "Leisure Activities Within the Family"; "The Education of Parents"; "Character Formation of the Child"; "Religious and Moral Aspects of Family Life"; "The Art of Living Together"; "Social and Cultural Life in the Family." . . . Without income of some sort, the family is impossible; with a limited income, there is much the family itself can do to improve its economic position; for this, technical training is necessary; the home must not only be well managed, it must be productive. . . . Art that is bought for the home is usually a bad bargain and rarely art; make your own art; build the solidarity of your dwelling with your own work and brain and heart; you will have something that no Grand Rapids suite can supply. . . . Living together is no easy job; its foundations are good will and forbearance and sacrifice and love, orderliness, cleanliness, good food. . . . A true family is a cultural unit; it must make its own culture, with songs in which all can join, stories all can enjoy, games all can play; without its own social life the role of the family degenerates into something sub-human. . . . The Christian family exists for the perfection of each of its members, as an individual soul rejoicing in the freedom of the sons of God; if it is anything less, it is to some degree a failure.

In all this, where is the revolution? It is so shot through with revolution that one does not see the forest for the trees. Above all, the whole approach is positive: no talk of *curbing* the evils of divorce (or birth control, or what you will), much talk of living together joyfully and lovingly; little talk of the difficulties and trials, much talk of how to surmount them. Then the lines of action proposed are many, not unit-

ary. No cure-alls are offered, no novelties: all is within a framework of the complex pattern woven by human wisdom in many cultures and many ages. Finally, the problem is not viewed in any way as a *racial* problem, but rather as a deeply human problem, cutting across race and class and binding together race and class under a common destiny. Nothing that was said or done at this convention but what could have been said or done in any white parish across Anacostia Creek, and, indeed, might be more needed there than in the place where it was said and done.

From an "underprivileged" Negro section in Washington comes an example for Americans to follow everywhere, and its spirit is the only spirit in which we can rid ourselves of our own greatest betrayal of Christianity and democracy.

AS YOUTH SEES IT

EDITED BY YOUTH

"So the Sisters began making room for their pupils. The little tots were put into the Chapel. The fifth and sixth grades took over Father's dining-room, while the third and fourth grades made themselves comfortable in the basement." . . . So writes Father Clarence J. Howard, S.V.D., Editor of the Catholic Negro magazine "*St. Augustine's Messenger*", in an article in the January issue, titled "*The Colored Sisters Come to Town*".

One would hardly expect to find the need for a pioneer work in so large a city as Chicago. Yet when one realizes the state of comparative neglect of the Negro's educational problem in many parts of our union, there should be little difficulty in understanding the need of pioneer work in nearly all our cities and towns.

* * *

"Father John Ryan, a very likable priest, laid the foundations of the new Holy Name of Mary Parish in September, 1940. All during his seminary days and throughout the ten years of his priesthood Father Ryan had cherished a desire to do missionary work among the colored people of the United States. This desire had been enkindled years ago when, as a boy, he used to spend many hours reading *The Colored Harvest*, the mission magazine of the Josephite Fathers, who work exclusively among the American Negroes.

"When Father Ryan realized the need of a Church in the Morgan Park Sector of Chicago, he was most eager to take up the work. To his delight the Archbishop, Most Rev. Samuel Stritch, D.D., entrusted the task to him."

Thus we see that Father Ryan's work was begun a little over a year ago. At first it was necessary to say Mass in a Public School Auditorium, while he secured the house which subsequently served as Rectory as well as Chapel. By May of 1941 he had gathered a First Communion Class of 32 children.

It was in August that five Colored Sisters, of the Order of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, came to help him in his work. Thus another of his plans was brought to actuality.

"I was certainly determined," he said, "to keep on trying until I *did* succeed in getting colored Sisters to come to Chicago." In September the School opened with an enrollment of 110 children—and while the Nuns set up improvised classrooms in the various rooms of Father's house, the building of a combination Church and School was begun. This building has just been completed.

* * *

Here is a story of courage and vision and hard work—one to which we can look for inspiration. If so much can be accomplished in so short a time, in a small parish of four hundred souls, does it make us feel that we, too, using our Faith and our energies, can perform a similar work in the many other untended Negro pastures throughout these United States.

* * *

It has long been a point of interesting research to me, to set about discovering the most common motive behind the anti-Negro feeling. It was never a surprise to find that in many persons such prejudice had no ground other than that whereby their susceptibility to the conventional prejudices of those about them led them, through misconception, to frown upon the Negro.

Recently, however, several of my acquaintances have expressed what seems to me a far less understandable reason for their reluctance to see the Negro rightfully established in our American society. The rather strange explanation runs something like this: "If we allow the Negro to function on the same educational, economic and social level as ours, he will not be content until he becomes our political Master. There will be a great struggle between the White and Negro races for supremacy." And it is actually possible that these persons have convinced themselves of the truth of this statement! Here is intolerance based not upon misunderstanding or ignorance but upon fear and selfishness. And no prejudice is so dangerous as that which springs from fear.

Are we allowing ourselves to taint our Christian principles with the current philosophy of suspicion? From such seeds sprang a Hitler and his Jew-hatred with all its consequent horrors. There is no time now for any such philosophy of suspicion in these United States; no time for interracial hatreds or intolerances. There should be time only for closer unity and understanding among all colors and classes—only time to put on the national strength of prayer so that we may be able to go out to combat the enemy of a Christ-bound and Love-girded people; remembering that the enemy, God-bereft (having banished Him with their own edict) can only fight with the weapons of fear and hatred.

M. McCORMACK



PLAYS And A Point Of View

By THEOPHILUS LEWIS

THE PORGY LEGEND

Of all white novelists who have tried their hands at "Negro" fiction, Dubose Heyward wrote with the clearest and broadest understanding of his subject. His insight penetrated to the obscure depths of Negro character, he observed the ways of Negro life with a sharp but sympathetic eye, and he was familiar with the intricacies and nuances of interracial relationships. But he was not at his best when he wrote "Porgy," his first and most widely known Negro novel.

Porgy is the maudlin story of the love life of a cripple, embroidered with such tear-jerking incidentals as a wife wailing over the body of her murdered husband and the anguish of women waiting for men who have gone down to the sea in ships which will not return, with interludes of black-face clowning for comic relief. So many hundreds of similar tales have been written about white characters that nowadays nobody bothers to read them, except fluttery old ladies of both sexes whose emotions were conditioned in the era that afflicted the world with such atrocities as Ouida, antimacassars and lavender and old lace. Such novels are still being written, of course, but they are published almost exclusively for the drug-store trade of such centers of culture as Plainfield, N. J., Waycross, Ga., Sombbrero, Wyo., and Sikeston, Missouri.

The thing that saved Porgy from the obscurity that usually engulfs novels of its kind was its pretense of being an interpretation of Negro life. It immediately became a best seller and was acclaimed as a classic. Then it was converted into a play and later into an opera. Now it is becoming a legend.

It is ironical that Dubose Heyward will probably be remembered by his most artificial and least mature work. That such should be the fate of the man who wrote "The Half Pint Flask" is more than irony. It borders on the tragic. In that story, in which the author describes a clash between Negro folk ways and Caucasian skepticism, one encounters a dignity and mysteriousness reminiscent of the "Wessex Tales," "The Half Pint Flask" is so superior to "Porgy" that one marvels that they were written by the same author, except upon reflection that all writers must pass through a period of immaturity.

These observations were called forth by the revival of "Porgy and Bess," the opera version of the legend. The story is quite as shoddy as it was in the form of a novel and a play. Incidentally, the production is entered in the play bill as George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess," while Dubose Heyward

and his wife, Dorothy, who collaborated with him in writing the play, have been relegated to the back ground of small type. If Gershwin's identification with the legend becomes complete it will be a break for the Heywards.

As I know nothing about music, I shall not attempt to pass judgment on Gershwin's opera. The big-time critics are raving about it, and they frequently know what they're talking about. Still, I do recall that George Jean Nathan once observed that all of Gershwin's music seemed to be a re-working of the only blues melody he ever heard in his life. As for me, I was less than inspired by the score, although some of the songs, especially "Summer Time," have long been among my favorites.

The actors seem capable, and if they had something to act, several of them would probably turn in adequate performances. All of them have good voices.

As a sheer production "Porgy" rates with the best. The lighting is effective and the scenes, especially the Catfish Row set, are a delight to the eye. For which credit goes to Cheryl Crawford and her subordinates, Robert Ross, Eva Jessye, Herbert Andrews and Paul du Pont, respectively the director, choral director, scenic designer and costume supervisor. The production is on sale in the Majestic.

The box office arrangements are rather mysterious. Seats are advertised from 55 cents up. I wonder just where the 55 cents seats can be. I paid \$1.65 for my ticket and my seat was practically on the roof.

Reflecting on the sumptuous production of "Porgy and Bess" quickens dormant meditations on two mortal maladies which currently threaten American drama: the absence of intelligent criticism and the subordination of drama to theater. Since the death of Heywood Brown, the deportation of St. John Irvine and the retirement of Alexander Woolcott American drama has had to worry along without a single discerning critic. It is true that George Jean Nathan, the most perspicacious of all American dramatic critics, is still alive and functioning, but who knows precisely where he is functioning? Probably in one of those ultra-highbrow periodicals which can be obtained from the newsstands only when you ask for it by name—if you know the name—or else he is writing for some ritzy magazine which retails for a dollar a copy. In either instance his influence on American drama has descended to nil.

Instead of the Nathans, Brouns, Woolcotts and St. John Irvines who formerly passed judgment on American drama, we now have a group of nondescript play reviewers who seem to know nothing of theater and less of drama, and are totally incapable of distinguishing one from the other. Brooks Atkinson must be excepted, of course, and occasionally Burns Mantle shows a flash of discernment. All the others are a crowd of fellows named Joe.

It may be observed that critics, however discriminating they may be, cannot force mediocre playwrights to produce significant plays; that their function is to appraise the plays that appear in the theater honestly and intelligently. The point is that while our current corps of critics may appraise plays honestly they do not evaluate them intelligently. They wax enthusiastic about any well mounted and well acted play

that achieves a first night. If our critics really knew their business they would withhold favorable comment from plays when their only merits are competent acting and lavish production.

One of the things that makes life worthwhile for a small-time reviewer is the fact that he can frequently escape from Broadway, where the emphasis is on acting and production, and grope his way up a dark alley or climb three flights of stairs to some hideaway little theater where acting and production are kept in their proper place and the emphasis is on drama . . . where the play's the thing. I am thinking, at the moment, of the Blackfriars' Guild, which has produced three good plays in the current season, with two months to go. I doubt that any Broadway producer can equal that record, or even approach it.

The Guild's second production was "Song Out of Sorrow," a play which future historians of English-American drama will probably bracket with Shaw's "Candida." If the author previously offered the play to commercial producers and they rejected it, it was probably because they were box-office and production-minded and were confirmed in their judgment by contemporary opinion.

The Guild's latest production was "The Years Between," by Edward Burbage. It is a pukka comedy which the Guild produced with commendably sound sense. The acting, reduced to its lowest common denominator, was good. The performances of Robert E. Perry, Jo Ann Dolan and Shirley Gregory might even be called brilliant with small margin for error. In Mr. Perry's case, there was no margin at all. Barbara Shure and Donal Cornwall rate exceptionally honorable mention. Hell! The entire company was good.

Since the Guild has presented three high-quality productions without a miss, it strikes me that they probably have secured the services of an exceptionally canny director. All three Guild productions have been directed by Dennis Gurney. This Gurney chap is good. Let's implore our personal guardian angels and our respective patron saints to protect him against the wiles of the Devil. Let's pray that he will continue to give the best that's in him to art and turn a deaf ear to the tinkle of the thirty, or thirty thousand, pieces of silver which Broadway may offer him to give his talent to what Upton Sinclair has called Mammonart.

FROM HERE AND THERE DURING THE MONTH

● SOUTH JAMAICA HOUSING PROJECT IS EXAMPLE OF HARMONY BETWEEN RACES

Despite the opinion in many quarters that Negroes and whites living in close proximity will inevitably result in friction of a racial nature, 1050 Negroes and 459 white families are harmonious and friendly residents of South Jamaica Houses, federalized low-cost housing project.

The housing project is nearly as isolated as a country village although scarcely a mile from the heart of Jamaica. In the houses the women have organized a Red Cross group and an organization called the Dorcas Society. The latter organization has a cooperative fund to aid tenants who get down on their luck.

There is also a Men's Association with an active sports and civic program.

Negro and white families indiscriminately share the same buildings and apartment floors. Mrs. Fred Caldwell, president of the Dorcas Society is a Negro. Mrs. Gladys Herzog, the vice-president, is white.

Whites in the building consists mainly of Italians. Other whites include Germans, Irish, Swedes, Lithuanians, Syrians and one family of Turks.

The only trouble has been three fist fights which involved whites only.

● A. PHILIP RANDOLPH WINS SPINGARN MEDAL

A. Philip Randolph, international president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and head of the March on Washington Movement, is to be the 27th recipient of the Spingarn Medal, awarded annually to the Negro who has performed the most distinguished service for his race during the year.

The Spingarn Medal Award Committee of the NAACP made its decision Saturday, January 31. It was stated that the medal is to be presented to Mr. Randolph in recognition of the dramatic culmination of his years of leadership in the field of labor organization and national affairs in the mobilization of Negro mass opinion in 1941 in a March on Washington, to exercise the constitutional right of citizens of a democracy to petition their government peaceably for the redress of grievances—this being done when other methods failed.

The committee said that Mr. Randolph's leadership was instrumental in the issuance of Executive Order 8802 and the establishment of the Committee on Fair Employment Practice both of which profoundly affect the basic economic status of the Negro and other minority groups.

● ACCUSES FOUR ROADS ON NEGRO TRAVEL

Washington, Feb. 6—C. S. Stamps, a Kansas City Negro, filed a complaint with the Interstate Commerce Commission today against the trustees of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway Company and against the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Company, the Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company and the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe Railway Company, charging discrimination in train accommodations. The complaint was a parallel in nearly all respects to that of Representative Mitchell of Chicago against the Rock Island Railroad last November in an appeal to the Supreme Court from the Interstate Commerce Commission's decision against Mr. Mitchell three years earlier.

Today's complaint by Mr. Stamps concerns alleged discrimination against Negro passengers between Dallas and Houston in Texas.

Mr. Stamps alleges that he bought a first-class ticket in Kansas City for Houston, but that instead of being furnished first-class accommodation he was cared for in a car "used for baggage and cooking and carrying of freight and express."

—*New York Times*

● NEGRO IS LYNCHED

BY MISSOURI CROWD

Sikeston, Mo., Jan. 25—A critically wounded Negro, suspected of an attempted attack on a white woman, was taken from the city jail today by a crowd of more than 300, which dragged him through the Negro district and then set the body afire.

Harold Wallace, assistant chief of police, identified the victim as Cleo Wright, 30-year-old cotton-mill worker.

He said Wright admitted he had stabbed and critically wounded Mrs. Dillard Sturgeon, 29, wife of an Army sergeant, and that after his capture he had stabbed Hess Perrigan, a patrolman. In turn Patrolman Perrigan shot Wright three times.

Several hours after the Negro had been but in the detention room of the city jail the crowd began gathering. At 11:30 A. M. it forced the front door of the City Hall and seized the victim.

Wright offered no resistance and said nothing. He was stuffed into a trunk compartment of a motor car and taken to the Negro district, where he was dragged through the streets behind an automobile. Later the body was cut loose and gasoline applied.

I. A. Myers, a newspaper man, estimated that about 300 persons watched the burning of the body.

—*N. Y. Herald-Tribune*

● NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

HOLD ANNUAL MEETING

A resolution calling for the improvement in the lot of the Negro as an essential to the successful prosecution of the war was adopted recently at the thirty-first annual meeting of the National Urban League, held at the Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East Twenty-second Street. L. Hollingsworth Wood, lawyer, presided.

The resolution was read by Lester B. Granger, a Negro, executive secretary of the organization. The resolution called the defeat of the Axis powers and the preservation of American democracy of primary importance, and added: "This does not mean that we shall retreat from positions already won, neither does it mean that we give over seeking new gains, even in the midst of war, for many improvements in the Negro's situation are essential to the successful prosecution of the war."

● HEROIC PRIEST BRAVES FIRE

TO ADMINISTER LAST RITES

Hornell, N. Y.—Two colored women trapped in the flames of a burning building received the Last Sacraments conditionally through the heroism of the Rev. Andrew T. Dissett, pastor of St. Ann's Church here.

Acting against the advice of authorities who warned him of falling embers and debris and blocked stairways, Father Dissett, accompanied by a police captain, made two trips into the building by way of a ladder to the roof before the bodies were located and the Last Rites of the Church administered.

BOOKS

"THEY KNEW LINCOLN". By JOHN E. WASHINGTON. E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc. 244 pages, with appendix. \$3.75.

One of our newspaper columnists tells a story that happened just about the time this book appeared. President Roosevelt had as dinner guests the cast of "Watch on the Rhine," among them Frank Wilson, who has the role of Negro butler in the play. Brought to the head of the table, Wilson heard the President tell the legend of Lincoln's ghost in the White House. Returning to his seat, he was asked, "What did he say?" and replied, "The President of the United States tried to convince me that the spirit of Lincoln still lives—as if I didn't know."

Here is a Negro writer who puts this conviction into a piece of genuine Lincolniana. It brings us for the first time a portrait of Lincoln as seen by Negro men and women who always "looked with contempt at anyone who tried to tell them there was any other reason why the war was fought except to set them free." The author's boyhood years were spent on E Street in Washington, close to the Old Ford Theater where Lincoln met his death. Here he heard wonderful stories about the Emancipator, his family, and Booth, from the mouths of some who had really seen them and from others who claimed they had seen their ghosts. The little boy who drew a picture of Booth only to slash and tear it in an access of juvenile fury often ran in terror when passing the old theater at night and the spell of the neighborhood remained through the years to give atmosphere and flavor to the story of Lincoln as he appeared to those who believed him to have been sent by God for their deliverance.

Wherever Lincoln lived, the author sought out the old folks whose stories would have gone unwritten had he not sat and listened as they let memory revive the days when they stood in the living presence of the man who had broken their chains. In Springfield, there were descendants who talked of "Billy the Barber," the Haiti-born Negro, who first impressed the President-to-be with the possibilities of the educated Negro and planted the seed which was to lead to the Emancipation Proclamation. From old Bibles, from newspaper clippings yellowed with age, from photographs treasured by jealous owners, from the research departments of libraries came the confirmation of all these things told by men and women who remembered the day when the City of Washington was full of businesses controlled by colored people and

valuable parts of the nation's capital was owned by ex-slaves, who had been taught to start buying a home as soon as they were able. In Lincoln's time all good citizens wished them luck and wanted to help them.

He writes of Mary Dines, of her stories of Lincoln's visits to the Contraband Camp, where the President "did just like everybody else." He was no President when he came to camp. "He stood and sang and prayed just like all the rest of the people." In his grandmother's home, the author heard old Aunt Phoebe tell how the city bells rang in the New Year—the year of their freedom. "Men and women jumped to their feet, yelled for joy, hugged and kissed each other." There were many who were able to contribute fresh material to the story, among them Aunt Vina, who "knew everything and had the memory of a mule;" John Henry Coghill, a living witness to the capture and death of Booth; Elizabeth Thomas, who took part in the defense of Port Stevens and threatened to kill any "Rebs" who tried to hurt Lincoln.

Nothing excels in human appeal the section devoted to the Negroes who served Lincoln in the White House: William Slade, confidential messenger and friend, treated with the greatest intimacy, and the first man to hear the words of the Gettysburg address; Rosetta Wells, seamstress, who told how Lincoln could "eat as much ham and cabbage as any man who dug in the dirt;" Solomon Johnson, personal barber, who afterwards became the first Negro United States Government clerk; Cornelia Mitchell, who was cook; and William Johnson, Lincoln's first bodyguard, and recipient of many kindnesses on the President's part. On no occasion did they betray his confidence in them, or reveal any information on White House affairs. Lincoln never treated these loyal menials as servants, but was always polite and requested rather than demanded service of them.

Intimate friend of Mrs. Lincoln was her dressmaker, Elizabeth Keckley, a Negro, with whom she shared her worries. The author deals at length with Mrs. Keckley's famous book, *Behind the Scenes*, and established beyond doubt that it was written by a ghost writer, James Redpath, and that regardless of what it contained, it was meant "to help Mrs. Lincoln." Portions of the book were condemned by the President's son, Robert, as a violation of confidence, but without it the public certainly would never have known about the family life of the President nor have possessed a key to the character of Mary Todd Lincoln, whose deep affection for a colored woman is thoroughly consistent with what Mr. Washington adds: "From my interviews with the old folks I found that she was beloved as no other white woman in public life . . . They thought of her as second only to the Emancipator."

Some of the material in this book comes to light for the first time and will be of particular interest to the specialist in Lincolniana. But this book was not written for the scholar. It is a work that is quite inspired, simply and colorfully written. It creates a new approach to America's most human President and besides being a Negro's tribute to his memory is one of the best memorials to the worth and dignity of Negro character this reviewer has read.

T. F. D.

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